

### Work Group Officers

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- \* Advisory Council Rep: Melyn Gasson, Galena
- \* Sec: John Curless, Stockton

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- \* Ali, Betty Vely, Elizabeth
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Contact an individual above if you would like to become involved in a Work Group for the U.S. Rt. 20 study or call 1-800-837-RT20.

## Snipe Hollow Alignment Eliminated Based on Purpose & Need, Traffic Study

U.S. Route 20 Advisory Council members were recently told that the Snipe Hollow alignment would not sufficiently meet the purpose and need for a four-lane highway in the region, so the IL Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration

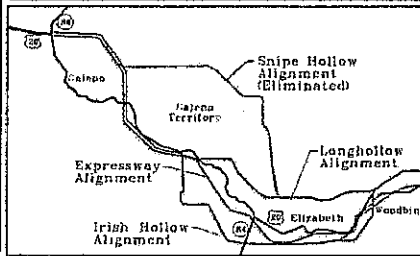
show that the Snipe Hollow alignment would not reduce traffic volumes enough on the existing two-lane roadway to assure safe travel in the future. In addition, this Snipe Hollow alignment would provide only one interchange to serve Galena and an

### Alternates still under study for a U.S. 20 four-lane:

- \* Expressway alignment
- \* Irish Hollow freeway alignment
- \* Longhollow freeway alignment

eliminated it from the study. William D. Ost, IDOT District Engineer, said that traffic projections and an origin and destination (O&D) traffic survey of the U.S. 20 corridor

undesirable "backdoor" access to the Galena Territory. Other alignments under study provide two interchanges for Galena and an interchange near the main entrance to the Galena Territory.



## U.S. Route 20: Public Meetings/Activities

A Public Information Meeting to present the prefinal alignments for the segment of the new four-lane highway between Woodbine and Freeport was held Feb. 23, 1999, in Lena. (See pages 2 & 3.) To complete the U.S. Route 20 engineering and environmental impact studies, the following activities are planned. Specific meeting times, dates and locations will be announced in the local media and Work Group mailings.

### Public Information Open House

IDOT will hold another Public Information Meeting in early summer on the prefinal alignments between Galena and Woodbine. A table showing the impacts for the entire length of the project will be presented as well. Objective: To afford the public an opportunity to review and comment on the prefinal alternatives and associated impacts.

### Work Groups & Advisory Council Reports

Based on information presented at the Public Information Meetings described above and on their own studies, the U.S. Route 20 Work Groups on Agriculture, Economic Development, Environment, Government and Tourism will report their findings to the U.S. Route 20 Advisory Council. Objective: To afford the Advisory Council the opportunity to integrate the input from each of the Work Groups along with their own analysis and report to IDOT their conclusions on the regional impacts associated with a new four-lane highway from the perspective of local residents.

### Environmental Impact Statement, Public Hearing and Record of Decision

IDOT will circulate a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for review by federal, state and local agencies and by the public prior to holding a public hearing to obtain comments on the project and EIS. A final EIS identifying the preferred alternative then will be developed and made available for comment. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) then will issue its Record of Decision setting forth the alternative selected for implementation.

Objective: To present the official findings of IDOT and FHWA regarding project impacts; to obtain final public comments on the project and EIS; and to present the FHWA's final decision regarding the project alternatives.

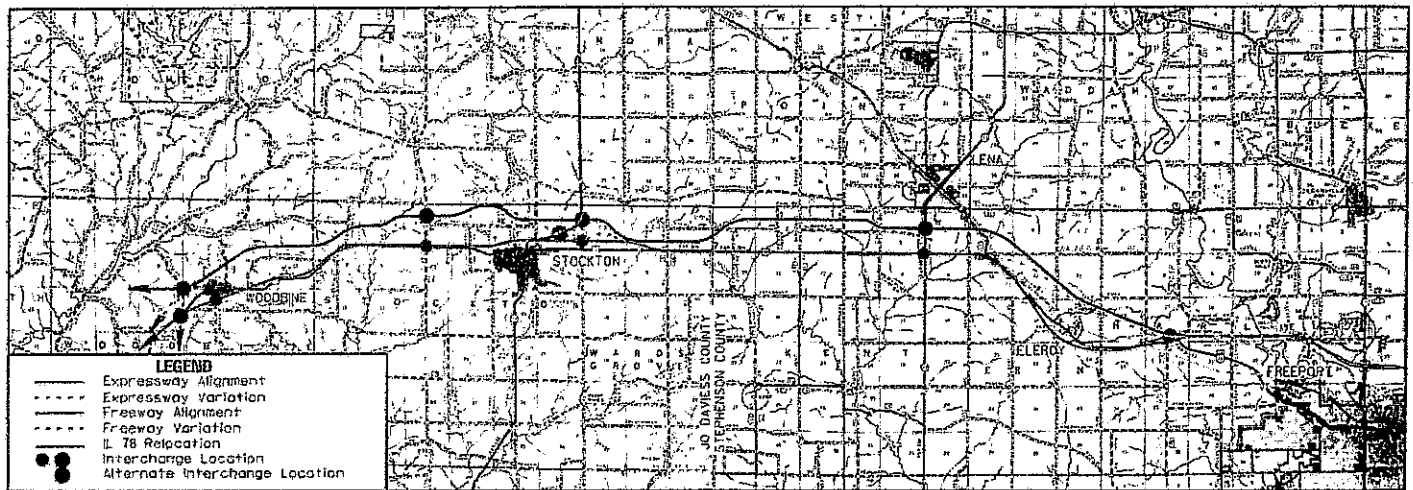
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## Public Information Meeting

## Alignments From Woodbine to Freeport Show Variations/Relocation of Illinois Route 78

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) presented large-scale maps of the four-lane freeway and expressway alignments between Woodbine and Freeport at IDOT's Public Information Open House held February 23. Some 250 people attended the meeting throughout the afternoon and evening.

They reviewed the maps in detail as well as a matrix showing costs and impacts of each alternate alignment. Most viewed a slide show as well which showed the history and major components

of the study and how the public is involved in assessing impacts, including the extensive contributions of the U.S. Route 20 Work Groups and Advisory Council.

Several alignment variations and a relocation of IL Route 78 are being considered.

\* **Stockton Freeway Variation**  
Simmons Mound northeast of Stockton not only contains a sensitive natural plant community, but also, due to its size, forces the proposed freeway to go either north or south of the mound.

Going south would place the highway closer to Stockton, making the town more visible from the highway.

### \* Lena Expressway Variation

A variation in the expressway alignment east of Lena would cause the expressway to be on the same alignment as the freeway between Wagner Road and Freeport. This configuration would avoid construction in the immediate vicinity of Elroy limiting the number of small businesses and homes that would be directly impacted.

### \* Relocation of IL Route 78

As a part of the freeway variation south of Stockton, making the town more visible from the highway, IDOT may extend IL Route 78 north from the center of Stockton to tie into the north leg of IL Route 78. Stockton access would be from relocated 78 with a diamond interchange proposed where the relocated IL 78 intersects the south Simmons Mound freeway alternative.

\* **IDOT Decision - Bolton Road Interchange**  
IDOT has chosen Bolton Road near Freeport for an interchange rather than the AYP Road as Bolton Road may become a west-side beltline.



# NEWSLETTER

U.S. Route 20 Public Involvement Program

Vol. 1, No. 3, May 2001

## Work Group Officers

### Agriculture

\* Chair: Ronald Mapes, Stockton  
\* Advisory Council Rep: Melvin  
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\* Sec: John Curtiss, Stockton

### Economic Development

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### Tourism

\* Co-Chairs: Kate Freeman, Galena  
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\* Advisory Council Rep: Tony Kemp,  
Galena  
\* Sec: Marianne Fitzgerald, Elizabeth

Contact an individual above if you  
would like to become involved in a  
Work Group for the U.S. Rt. 20  
study or call 1-800/837-RT20.

## TECHNICAL REPORTS RELEASED Study Wrap-Up Underway

The U.S. Route 20 Advisory Council and its Work Groups are scheduling meetings this summer to evaluate the effects of building a new four-lane highway in Stephenson and Jo Daviess Counties, according to Illinois Department of Transportation District Engineer Roger Rocke.

"We all have a significant amount of work to do to conclude the U.S. 20 study over the next few months and to hold a public hearing by early 2002," Rocke said. "Citizen input has greatly influenced the location of the final alternate alignments developed during this study. I look forward to the recommendations of the Work Groups and Advisory Council."

The results of special technical studies on agriculture, air quality, noise, ecology, socio-economics and visual resources will be presented at a series of U.S. 20 Work Group meetings, each to be held at 7 p.m. at the Elizabeth Community Building in Elizabeth, Illinois. The following is a schedule of these meetings. Meeting dates and times also will be announced in the local news media.

### WORK GROUP MEETING SCHEDULE

DATE	REPORT	SPONSOR
May 31	Agriculture	Agriculture Work Group
June 7	Ecology	Environment Work Group
June 14	Socio-Economics	Economic Development & Government Work Groups
June 21	Air, Noise & Visual Resources	Tourism & Environment Work Groups

These technical reports, which contain extensive data, are developed in support of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) being written for the U.S. 20 (continued on page 2...)

## Study Wrap-Up Underway . . . continued

project. The Work Groups will use the results of these studies to support and supplement their own analyses.

Although these technical reports are not written for the general public, they may be reviewed at the IDOT District Office in Dixon, Illinois, or by contacting a Work Group (see the list on page 1).

The Work Groups will meet in June and early July to use the technical data and their own criteria to evaluate the effects each alternate has on agriculture, economic development, the environment, government and tourism in the region.

Work Groups will present reports on their findings to the U.S. Route 20 Advisory Council by July 15. Advisory Council members will then prepare overall recommendations for IDOT by the end of August.

IDOT will hold a public meeting (open-house public hearing) on the Draft EIS after the first of the year, and then select an alignment based on its studies and public input for consideration by the Federal Highway Administration.

## Illinois First Program Provides Funding For U.S. 20 Bypasses

Governor Ryan's Illinois FIRST program is providing funding for improving U.S. Route 20 in the areas of Galena and Freeport, according to District Engineer Roger Rocke.

A total of \$23.6 million has been allocated to be used for the design and construction of an interchange at IL 75 and upgrading 3.1 miles of the existing Freeport bypass to four lanes between IL 26 and Springfield Road.

An additional \$6.5 million is scheduled to go toward engineering design and land acquisition for the proposed bypass around the northeast side of Galena, a section covered in the U.S. Route 20 Glacier Shadow Pass project study.

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## IMPORTANT ACTION ALERT: DECISION 20

U.S. Rt. 20 Questions?  
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#### Tourism

- Co-Chairs: Kate Freeman, Galena
- Gerard Bausman, Elizabeth
- Advisory Council Rep: Tony Kemp, Galena
- Sec: Marianne Fitzgerald, Elizabeth

Contact an individual above if you have questions about Work Group or Advisory Council reports or contact the U.S. 20 hotline at 1-800-837-RT20 for other questions about IDOT's study.

Illinois Department of Transportation

### Advisory Council to Hold Its Final Meeting To Make Four-Lane Alignment Recommendation

The U.S. 20 Advisory Council will hold its final meeting on September 6, 2001 at 7:00 p.m. in the upper level of the Lena Community Center, 497 Lions Drive, Lena, Illinois. From Illinois 73, go west on Stage Coach Trail (Galena Road) for four blocks and north along North Lake Road (County Road 7) for two blocks and then head east onto Lions Drive. The Council will report its findings and recommendations to IDOT regarding a new four-lane U.S. Route 20. The public is encouraged to attend.

Over the past several weeks the Advisory Council has been developing its recommendations and report regarding a new four-lane highway after reviewing each of the Work Group impact assessment reports and its own impact assessment criteria. The criteria developed by the Council assessed impacts that the Work Groups did not address but that the Council felt should be taken into consideration, such as cost to build and traffic safety.

Advisory Council spokesperson Jim Gitz stated, "After deliberating over the Work Group reports and IDOT's technical study data for the 12 possible alternates, Council members have come to a consensus which we feel best represents the needs of northwest Illinois and its communities and minimizes the impacts of building a four-lane highway."

### IDOT to Review Council Recommendations

The Illinois Department of Transportation will consider and include the U.S. 20 Advisory Council's recommendations in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The DEIS contains the results of technical reports, socio-economic studies, a visual assessment and impact analyses for the 12 highway alternates under study. In addition, the DEIS will include input from the general public.

After a further review by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), a public hearing on the DEIS will be held early next year. It is anticipated that the DEIS will be on the IDOT web site for public review at: <http://www.dot.state.il.us/deisen/enw.html>. This web site will be confirmed when the DEIS becomes available. The document also will be on file at the city libraries in Galena, Elizabeth, Stockton and Freeport.

### Answers To Your Questions About U.S. Route 20 Project Study

The U.S. Route 20 four-lane highway study has extended over a number of years. Periodically, individuals new to the region join the study in progress. Since they were not at early meetings, they may have missed details about the study.

Thus, the following answers to questions posed by individuals at the July 26 Advisory Council meeting are provided to update anyone new to the study. Definitions of commonly used terms are included to clarify some discussions.

#### Commonly used terms:

**Intersection** - the point at which two (or more) different roadways meet at the same elevation, or "at grade". Intersections are often controlled with stop signs or traffic signals.

**Interchange** - a type of construction that allows the crossing of two or more roadways using overpasses and underpasses, removing the potential conflict of intersecting traffic where the roadways cross. The roadways are connected by on and off ramps.

**Full access control** - restriction on traffic such that entry to a four-lane roadway is limited to interchanges with on and off ramps.

**Partial access control** - control of traffic such that entry to a four-lane roadway is partially restricted. Access to the roadway may be provided by a limited number of intersections and by interchanges with on and off ramps. Commercial entrances are not allowed.

**Freeway** - a fully access-controlled highway with four or more lanes where interchanges are used for entering or exiting the roadway.

**Expressway** - a partially access-controlled highway with four or more lanes where both intersections and interchanges can be used for entering or exiting a roadway.

**Technical studies and reports** - documents that communicate the results of such studies as socio-economics, noise, air quality, ecological resources, historical resources and archeology. While these documents are used as support for the Environmental Impact Statement, they are not written for the general public. However, by public request, IDOT has made the U.S. 20 technical studies and reports available for public review.

**Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)** - a document required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) when a federally-funded or permitted project would have a significant impact on the natural and/or human environment. It is an integrating document that describes the environmental effects identified in the technical studies and reports and by the public. The EIS is designed to be read by the public.

**Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)** - an early version of the EIS circulated to agencies and public for comment. The DEIS is a major focus of final public hearing.

**Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)** - is final version of the EIS that incorporates agency and public comments.

#### Questions & Answers

**Q-** Is a new four-lane highway really needed? wider, faster highway that important? A new four-lane might cause more traffic to come here.

**A-** The need for a new four-lane highway is primarily to the high traffic volumes and accident already on existing U.S. 20. Several sections of 1 20 between Galena and Freeport have an accident higher than the statewide average. This is due in to inadequate shoulder widths, steep grades, 1 traffic volumes and the fact that two-thirds of the roadway consists of no passing zones. Right now if vehicles, school buses, tourist traffic, local traffic through traffic must use the same two-lane road. By building a new four-lane highway, traffic volume will be accommodated, accidents will be reduced local traffic will not have to compete as much through traffic.

**Q-** What is the purpose of the U.S. 20 project?

**A-** The purpose of the project is to address following needs:

- **system capacity** - Growing traffic volume along U.S. 20 have increasingly affected traffic flow and lowered the level of service.
- **traffic safety** - Data provided by IDOT show an above-average accident rate for existing 1 20. This is due in large part to high traffic volumes and poor roadway geometry.
- **community access** - There is a need to improve access to and between the communities along U.S. 20 and between the communities and their markets.
- **regional economic characteristics** - There need for a roadway facility that will support enhance the region's ongoing economic growth development.
- **system continuity** - This project is needed to complete the missing four-lane section of 1 20 in Illinois. Once present plans completed, U.S. 20 will be a continuous 4-lane highway across much of Illinois and Iowa.

**Q-** What is the length of this four-lane highway project and how much will it cost?

**A-** The project alternates range in length from 47.51.9 miles and are estimated to cost between \$511 \$641 million depending on the alternate selected.

**Q-** Was safety considered in any of the Work Group reports?

**A-** Yes, two Work Groups used criteria to measure safety from their own perspectives. The Agriculture Work Group was concerned with the mixing of farm vehicles with trucks and other highway traffic. One of its criteria focused on traffic mixing. The Economic Development Work Group was concerned with the separation of local business traffic from through traffic. This was measured in its business traffic safety criterion.

**Q-** To assess overall traffic safety for an expressway or a freeway, are accidents on existing U.S. 20 counted?

**A-** Yes. In fact, the Advisory Council developed its own safety criterion which addressed the total number of accidents per year for the new roadway and remaining portions of existing U.S. 20. Factors considered included traffic volumes, length of roadway and accident rates by road type. While freeways have been shown to be safer than expressways, either would be safer than existing U.S. 20.

**Q-** What speed is the four-lane highway designed for?

**A-** The four-lane highway is designed for 70 miles per hour. The legal speed limit is expected to be 65 miles per hour.

**Q-** How many acres are taken for an interchange on a freeway?

**A-** The additional area beyond that required for the four-lane and the crossroad roadways averages 40 to 45 acres. The total interchange area including the highway and crossroad averages 95 to 100 acres.

**Q-** How long is the tunnel proposed in some alignments and what would it cost?

**A-** The tunnel option is actually two parallel tunnels, one for the eastbound lanes and one for the westbound. Each tunnel is 4000 feet long. Although, the total cost for both tunnels is estimated to be \$52 million, each tunnel alternate would cost only \$8 million more than the same alternate without the tunnel. This is because of the more rugged terrain associated with the no-tunnel alternates in the short area where the alignments differ.

**Q-** Why does the FHWA air quality model use a vehicle speed of 35 miles per hour at a temperature of 21°F when it typically isn't that cold and we don't normally drive that slowly?

**A-** This model is designed to identify the largest quantity of car emissions that may occur. Typically, cars emit fewer pollutants when the engine is warm and operating at higher speeds rather than the slower speeds associated with stop and go driving in town.

**Q-** How did FHWA measure noise impacts in the U.S. Route 20 four-lane study?

**A-** FHWA identified sensitive noise receptors located along each alternate, such as the nursing home in Lena. An FHWA computer model was then used to predict the impact of each alternate on individual receptors. Traffic mix, including trucks, as well as the local topography are built into the noise model.

**Q-** Did the Government Work Group study take into account the Jo Daviess County land-use plan?

**A-** Yes. The Jo Daviess County land-use plan focuses on maintaining scenic beauty and that growth be contiguous to communities, not at interchanges and not scattered. The plan will be reviewed again once IDOT selects an alternative. The City of Galena and Stephenson County also have land-use plans that were reviewed with regards to their compatibility with the new four-lane highway. Galena's plan focuses on directing growth to the west side of town. The Stephenson county plan recommends a freeway. The Government Work Group held meetings with both Jo Daviess and Stephenson County land-use planners to discuss the compatibility of each county's plan with the U.S. Route 20 proposals.

**Q-** Why in the Government Work Group report is there a local cost of \$1.8 million to upgrade county roads if a Longhollow alternate is used?

**A-** The Jo Daviess County highway engineer found that it would cost \$1.8 million to upgrade the Elizabeth/Scates Mound Road because many roadway users are expected to use this road to get from the freeway to Elizabeth rather than the proposed extension of Rt. 84 that would be maintained by the state. No other local roadway upgrade costs are expected to be needed for any alternate alignment.

**Q-** Why did the Environment Work Group study include quotes that use of the Irish Hollow and Upper Irish Hollow alternates would be inappropriate?

**A-** Even though the Environment Work Group utilized objective data to obtain alternate preference scores like the other Work Groups, members also wanted to provide some narrative comments that would emphasize how important the findings are. For example, technical analysts commented in their reports that Irish Hollow should be avoided because of high quality scenic areas, the diversity of plants and wetlands there, as well as threatened and endangered species considerations near the Tapley Woods area.

**Q-** Where can I read the technical reports that go into the EIS?

**A-** They are available at the city libraries in Galena, Elizabeth, Stockton, and Freeport.

**Q-** Will IDOT announce to the public its choice of a four-lane alternate at the public hearing?

**A-** IDOT will discuss all 12 alternates at the public hearing and may present its preferred alternate; however, the final decision on which alternate would be built must be made jointly between IDOT and the FHWA after the public hearing and after all comments on the draft EIS have been reviewed.